

BOOK IX.—BŒOTIA.

CHAPTER I.

BŒOTIA is contiguous to Attica, and Plataea to Eleutherae. The Bœotians got that name for all the race from Bœotus, who they say was the son of Itonus the son of Amphictyon and the Nymph Melanippe. Their towns are called sometimes after men but more frequently after women. The Plataeans were I think the original inhabitants of the land, and they got their name from Plataea the daughter of the river-god Asopus. That they were originally ruled over by kings is I think clear: for in old times kingdoms were all over Greece, there were no democratic governments. But the Plataeans know of no other kings but Asopus and still earlier Cithæron, one of whom gave his name to the mountain and the other to the river. And I cannot but think that Plataea, who gave her name to the town, was the daughter of the king Asopus and not of the river-god.

The Plataeans did nothing memorable before the battle which the Athenians fought at Marathon, but they took part in that struggle after the landing of Xerxes, and ventured to embark on ships with the Athenians, and repelled on their own soil Mardonius, the son of Gobryas, the General of Xerxes. And it twice happened to them to be driven from their country and again restored to it. For in the Peloponnesian war the Lacedæmonians besieged and took Plataea: and when, after the peace which Antalcidas the Spartan negotiated between the Greeks and the king of the Persians, it was reinhabited by the Plataeans who returned from Athens, a second misfortune was it seems destined to come upon them. For war was not openly declared against the Thebans, but the Plataeans said that they were still at peace with them, because when the Lacedæ-

monians occupied Cadmea, they had no share either in suggesting it or in bringing it about. The Thebans on the other hand said that it was the Lacedæmonians who had brought about the peace, and who afterwards when they had violated it thought that all had broken truce. The Platæans therefore, thinking the conduct of the Thebans rather suspicious, occupied their town with a strong garrison, and the farmers did not even go into the fields which were at some distance from the town at every period of the day, but watched for the times when the Thebans held their general meetings, and at such times tilled their farms in quiet. But Neocles, who was at that time Bœotarch at Thebes, and had noticed this cunning on the part of the Platæans, told all the Thebans to go armed to the assembly, and led them from Thebes not straight across the plain but in the direction of Hysiæ and Eleutheræ and Attica, where no outposts had been placed by the Platæans, and got to the walls about mid-day. For the Platæans, thinking the Thebans were at their meeting, had shut the gates and gone out to the fields. And the Thebans made conditions with those who were in the town that they should leave the place before sunset, the men with one dress and the women with two. At this time the fortune of the Platæans was rather different from the former occasion when the town was taken by the Lacedæmonians and Archidamus. For then the Lacedæmonians blockaded them and shut them in by a double wall so that they could not get out, whereas now the Thebans prevented their getting into the town at all. This second capture of Plataea was the third year after Leuctra, when Asteus was Archon at Athens. And the town was rased to the ground by the Thebans entirely except the temples, but there was no sack, and the Athenians took in the Platæans a second time. But when Philip was victorious at Chæronea, he introduced a garrison into Thebes, and among other things to destroy the Theban power, restored the Platæans.

## CHAPTER II.

IF you turn off a little to the right from the high road in the Plateæan district near Mount Cithæron, you come to the ruins of Hysiæ and Erythræ. They were formerly cities, and among the ruins of Hysiæ there is still a temple of Apollo half-finished, and a Holy Well, of which whoever drank in former days prophesied, if we may believe the tradition of the Bœotians. And on your return to the high road on the right is what is said to be the tomb of Mardonius. It is admitted that the dead body of Mardonius was missing after the battle, but as to who buried him there are different traditions. What is certain is that Artontes the son of Mardonius gave many gifts to the Ephesian Dionysophanes, and also to several Ionians, for not having neglected his father's burial. And this road leads from Eleutheræ to Plataæa.

As you go from Megara there is a spring on the right hand, and a little further a rock called the bed of Actæon, because they say he used to sleep on that rock when tired with hunting, and in that spring they say he saw Artemis bathing. And Stesichorus of Himera has represented the goddess as dressing Actæon in a deerskin, so that his dogs should devour him, that he should not be married to Semele. But I think that madness came upon the dogs of Actæon without the intervention of the goddess, and if they were mad and did not distinguish him they would rend in pieces whoever they met. In what part of Mount Cithæron Pentheus the son of Echion met with his fate, or where they exposed Œdipus after his birth, no one knows, as we do know the cross-roads on the way to Phocis where Œdipus slew his father. Mount Cithæron is sacred to Zeus of Cithæron, but I shall enter into all that more fully when I come to that part of my subject.

Near the entrance to Plataæa is the tomb of those who fell fighting against the Medes. The other Greeks have one common tomb. But the Lacedæmonians and Athenians who fell have separate burial-grounds, and some *elegiac* lines of Simonides as their epitaph. And not far from the

common tomb of the Greeks is the altar of Zeus Eleutherius. The tombs are of brass, but the altar and statue of Zeus are of white stone. And they celebrate still every fifth year the festival called Eleutheria, in which the chief prizes are for running: they run in heavy armour in front of the altar. And the Greeks set up a trophy about 15 stades from the town for the battle at Plataea.

In the town of Plataea, as you go on from the altar and statue erected to Zeus Eleutherius, is a hero-chapel to Plataea, I have already stated the traditions about her and my own views. There is also a temple of Hera, well worth seeing for its size and the beauty of the statues. As you enter it Rhea is before you carrying to Cronos the stone wrapped up in swaddling-clothes, pretending it was the child she had just given birth to. And the Hera here they call Full-Grown, her statue is a large one in a standing position. Both these statues are in Pentelican marble by Praxiteles. There is also another statue of Hera in a sitting position by Callimachus, they call this statue The Bride for the following reason.

### CHAPTER III.

THEY say Hera for some reason or other was displeased with Zeus and went to Eubœa, and Zeus when he could not appease her went to Cithæron (who ruled at Plataea), who was inferior to no one in ingenuity. He recommended Zeus to make a wooden statue and dress it up and draw it in a waggon with a yoke of oxen, and give out that he intended to marry Plataea the daughter of Asopus. And he did as Cithæron instructed him. And directly Hera heard of it she returned at once, and approached the waggon and tore the clothes of the statue, and was delighted with the trick when she found a wooden image instead of a young bride, and was reconciled to Zeus. In memory of this reconciliation they have a festival called *Dædala*, because statues were of old called *dædalata*. And they called them so I think before the times of Dædalus the Athenian, the son of Palamaon, for he was called Dædalus I take it from his statues, and not from his

birth up. This festival is celebrated by the Plataeans every seventh year, according to what my Antiquarian guide informed me, but really at less interval: the exact time however between one festival and the next though I wished I could not ascertain. The festival is celebrated as follows. There is an oak-coppice not far from Alalcomenæ. Of all the oaks in Bœotia the roots of these are the finest. When the Plataeans come to this oak-coppice, they place there portions of boiled meat. And they do not much trouble themselves about other birds, but they watch crows very carefully, for they frequent the place, and if one of them seizes a piece of meat they watch what tree it sits upon. And on whatever tree it perches, they carve their wooden image, called *dædalum*, from the wood of this tree. This is the way the Plataeans privately celebrate their little festival Dædala: but the great festival of Dædala is a festival for all Bœotia and celebrated every sixth year; for that was the interval during which the festival was discontinued when the Plataeans were in exile. And 14 wooden statues are provided by them every year for the little festival Dædala, which the following draw lots for, the Plataeans, the Coronæans, the Thespians, the Tanagræans, the Chæro-neans, the Orchomenians, the Lebadeans, and the Thebans: for they thought fit to be reconciled with the Plataeans, and to join their gathering, and to send their sacrifice to the festival, when Cassander the son of Antipater restored Thebes. And all the small towns which are of lesser note contribute to the festival. They deck the statue and take it to the Asopus on a waggon, and place a bride on it, and draw lots for the order of the procession, and drive their waggons from the river to the top of Cithæron, where an altar is prepared for them constructed in the following manner. They get square pieces of wood about the same size, and pile them up one upon one another as if they were making a stone building, and raise it to a good height by adding firewood. The chief magistrates of each town sacrifice a cow to Hera and a bull to Zeus, and they burn on the altar all together the victims (full of wine and incense) and the wooden images, and private people offer their sacrifices as well as the rich, only they sacrifice smaller animals as sheep, and all the sacrifices

are burnt together. And the fire consumes the altar as well as the sacrifices, the flame is prodigious and visible for an immense distance. And about 15 stades lower than the top of the mountain where they build this altar is a cave of the Nymphs of Mount Cithæron, called Sphragidion, where tradition says those Nymphs prophesied in ancient times.

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE Plataeans have also a temple to Aëra Athene, which was built from the spoil given to them by the Athenians after the battle of Marathon. The statue of the goddess is wooden but gilt over: the head and fingers and toes are of Pentelican marble. In size it is nearly as large as the brazen one in the Acropolis, (which the Athenians dedicated as the firstfruits of the battle at Marathon,) and is also the work of Phidias. And there are paintings in the temple by Polygnotus, Odysseus having just slain the suitors, and by Onatas the first expedition of Adrastus and the Argives against Thebes. These paintings are on the walls in the vestibule of the temple, and at the base of the statue of the goddess is an effigy of Arimnestus, who commanded the Plataeans in the fight against Mardonius and still earlier at Marathon.

There is also at Plataea a temple of Eleusinian Demeter, and the tomb of Leitus, the only leader of the Bœotians that returned home after the Trojan war. And the fountain Gargaphia was fouled by Mardonius and the Persian cavalry, because the Greek army opposed to them drank of it, but the Plataeans afterwards made the water pure again.

As you go from Plataea to Thebes you come to the river Oeroe, Oeroe was they say the daughter of Asopus. And before crossing the Asopus, if you turn aside and follow the stream of the Oeroe for about 40 stades, you come to the ruins of Scolus, among which are a temple of Demeter and Proserpine not complete, and half the statues of the goddesses. The Asopus is still the boundary between the districts of Plataea and Thebes.

## CHAPTER V.

THE district of Thebes was they say first inhabited by the Ectenes, whose king was the Autochthon Ogygus, hence many of the poets have called Thebes Ogygiæ. And the Ectenes they say died off with some pestilence, and Thebes was repopled by the Hyantes and Aones, Bœotian races I imagine and not foreigners. And when Cadmus and his Phœnician army invaded the land the Hyantes were defeated in battle and fled the following night, but the Aones were submissive and were allowed by Cadmus to remain in the land and mix with the Phœnicians. They continued to live in their villages, but Cadmus built the town called to this day Cadmea. And afterwards when the town grew, Cadmea was the citadel for lower Thebes. Cadmus made a splendid marriage if, according to the Greek tradition, he married the daughter of Aphrodite and Ares, and his daughters were famous, Semele as the mother of a son by Zeus, and Ino as one of the sea goddesses. Amongst the greatest contemporaries of Cadmus were the Sparti, Chthonius and Hyperenor and Pelorus and Udæus: and Echion was chosen by Cadmus as his son-in-law for his conspicuous valour. About these men I could obtain no further knowledge, so I follow the general tradition about the origin of the name Sparti.<sup>1</sup> And when Cadmus migrated to the Illyrians and to those of them who were called Enchelians, he was succeeded by his son Polydorus. And Pentheus the son of Echion had great power both from the lustre of his race and the friendship of the king, though he was haughty and impious and justly punished by Dionysus. The son of Polydorus was Labdacus. He on his death left a son quite a boy, whom as well as the kingdom he entrusted to Nycteus. The sequel I have already set forth in my account about Sicyonia, as the circumstances attending the death of Nycteus, and how the guardianship of the boy and care of the realm devolved upon Lycus the brother of Nycteus: and the boy dying also

<sup>1</sup> Namely, that they were armed men who sprang up from the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus

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